

COMMENTARY

HAS SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM HALTED?

The Record Since Stalin's Death

PETER MEYER

IN LATE April of this year, a weird treason trial took place in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, which deserved more than the few lines it got in a late city edition of the metropolitan newspapers. Here was no routine operation of the totalitarian justice-mill such as the outside world has become inured to, those daily court proceedings in Communist countries in which some poor devils confess to espionage and sabotage in the service of Wall Street. These victims were no "mere" workers who failed to fulfill their norms, peasants who did not deliver enough grain, clergymen or believers who

FOLLOWING Stalin's death and the abrupt repudiation of the Moscow "doctors' plot," it was (and still is) widely presumed that Soviet Russia, as part of a modification of her hitherto intransigent attitude, had called off the anti-Semitic campaign which reached its high point in the Prague trials of Rudolf Slansky and other "Zionist conspirators." Unhappily, recent events in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Hungary, as here reported by PETER MEYER, show that the present reality is of quite a different order than these hopeful beliefs. Mr. Meyer, a frequent writer in these pages on Jewry under Soviet rule, is co-author of *Jews in the Soviet Satellites* (Syracuse), a study sponsored by the Library of Jewish Information of the American Jewish Committee. His most recent contribution was "That Big Deal with the Russians" (March 1954).

opposed the *Gleichschaltung* of their community, or citizens who let slip a few words of criticism. The defendants in this case had belonged to the highest circles of Slovak Communism. One of them, Gustav Husak, had been the Premier of Slovakia's semi-autonomous cabinet. With him in the dock were his Minister of the Interior, Daniel Okali; Minister of Education, Laco Novomesky, a poet and the best-known Slovak Communist writer; and the Minister for Religious Affairs, Laco Holdos, who was a member of Communism's "Spanish aristocracy," having fought under GPU orders in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. The fifth defendant, Ivan Horvath, was the former Czechoslovakian envoy to Hungary. All had been members of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia or of its Slovak branch.

Except for Holdos, who was of working class origin, all of these men had been radical Slovak intellectuals who joined the Communist movement in their student days. They had gathered around an avant-garde magazine, *Dav* ("The Masses"), which demanded the "national" as well as the "social" liberation of the Slovak people. "Social liberation" was a circumlocution for Communist rule, but "national liberation" meant Slovakia's independence from the Czechs, within, however, the framework of some

Communist world federation. On orders from Moscow, the Czechoslovak Communist party had supported the slogan of Slovak independence from the middle 20's on; such slogans were always handy sticks with which to belabor the "imperialists," among whom pre-war Czechoslovakia, allied with France, was numbered.

In spite of this appeal to Slovak nationalism, two-thirds of the Slovak electorate voted against Communism in the last free elections before the Communist coup of 1948. Following the coup, there was an abrupt change of line and Slovak "separatism," even in the form of the mildest aspirations toward autonomy, was denounced as treasonable. The ideological leader of Slovak Communism, Foreign Minister Vlado Clementis, was the first Communist of prominence to be purged in Czechoslovakia. This was in March 1950; the man who brought about his fall was the then omnipotent Secretary General of the Communist party, Rudolf Slansky. But soon the purge veered about and Slansky himself was swept up in it. Ironically, the "Slovak nationalist" Clementis and the "radical internationalist" Slansky were tried together at Prague in proceedings whose violently anti-Semitic character shocked the world, and were executed by the same hangmen at the end of 1952.*

Husak, Novomesky, and their present co-defendants had played the part of repentant witnesses in the Slansky trial. Their crime had been Slovak nationalism and they were considered Clementis' rather than Slansky's accomplices. They all come from Catholic or Protestant families; none is a Jew.

THE greater the surprise, then, when Radio Bratislava and the Czechoslovak press, in a communiqué on the trial, accused these defendants of the same crime for which Slansky and his fellow "traitors" (all but three, Jews) had been hanged—furthering a Jewish conspiracy. They had neglected to

*See this writer's "The Jewish Purge in the Satellite Countries," COMMENTARY, September 1952; and "Stalin Follows in Hitler's Footsteps," January 1953.

check Zionist activities and they had failed to punish subversive elements described as "Zionists," "Jewish capitalist smugglers," "Jewish Gestapo agents," and "agents of the Joint." Okali, the former Minister of the Interior, was accused of having helped two Zionist leaders to escape the country and of having stopped an investigation into the traitorous activities of the local branch of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. To quote from the prosecutor's summation:

The defendant Okali, in his capacity as Slovak Commissar of the Interior, supported and protected groups of Zionists and their organizations in Czechoslovakia, and prevented the exposure of their collaborationist and subversive activities, although he was fully aware that they were a faithful instrument and bulwark of Western imperialism and its plans of expansion, aimed at the People's Democracies and the Soviet Union.

In his "confession," Okali was obliged to denounce the "Zionists" not only as agents of the U. S., but also as creatures of the Gestapo and the Slovak puppet government of Father Tiso. Slovak Jews, thousands of whom perished in the gas chambers, were thus depicted as the henchmen and agents of their very murderers.

Not only political Zionism but the mere fact of emigration (which Communist Czechoslovakia had permitted up to 1949) was denounced as a crime; merely to have tolerated it was treason. Said the prosecutor:

In full agreement with the treacherous aims of the subversive conspiratorial center, Okali and other defendants allowed several Zionist leaders, among them Winterstein and Weiss, to escape punishment and lead an organized flight of Zionists and Jewish capitalists with their properties from the country.

For these and similar crimes, Okali was sentenced to eighteen years in jail; his boss, Husak, received a life sentence; and the three other defendants received sentences of twenty-two, thirteen, and ten years respectively.

So conspicuous was the trial's Jewish emphasis that many European press comments

pointed to this as its most important feature. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* commented on April 27 and 28:

A really sensational surprise is the revival in full strength of the anti-Semitic *leitmotiv* of the Slansky trial. . . .

The punishing of non-Jewish defendants for allegedly protecting Jews is new, and one can easily understand the catastrophic consequences this will have for the situation of Jews in Czechoslovakia. . . .

The London *Jewish Chronicle* wrote on April 30:

In tone and substance the [Czechoslovak] broadcast was provocatively anti-Jewish, much more prominence having been given to the charges of the pro-Zionist activities of the prisoners than to other parts of the indictment against them.

It may perhaps be said that the Bratislava trial was a purely local affair in which provincial officials mechanically rehashed the old charges of the Slansky trial. We are certain to hear this objection from those who cling to any charitable interpretation of Communist crimes to shield their own anxiously maintained complacency.

The Bratislava charges, however, were no mere rehash of old accusations. One important feature of the Slansky trial was eliminated, another was given added emphasis. The Prague trial had been conducted against a "Zionist-Titoist" subversive center; in Bratislava, not a word was said about Titoism, which no longer figures as a charge in the show trials and propaganda blasts of any of the satellite countries. But the denunciation of "Zionism" and "Jewish capitalists" figured very large indeed. There was nothing routine and perfunctory about these calculated assaults on the Jews in the Bratislava trial. They must have been made as the result of a policy decision. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* cannot be far from the truth when it assumes that this decision was made in Moscow.

Does this mean that Moscow is now taking up the anti-Semitic campaign where it had abandoned it after the death of Stalin? This would be an inaccurate way to describe mat-

ters. For, in spite of all the wishful thinking to the contrary, *Moscow never abandoned its anti-Jewish campaign.*

II

IN APRIL 1953, when the allegations against the Moscow Jewish doctors were dismissed and the Soviet State Security Minister Semyon D. Ignatiev was sent packing for fomenting "national enmities" and "racial hatred," a wave of relief swept the Jewish communities of the West. A projected protest conference of Jewish organizations in Switzerland was abandoned with a haste that did not allow for any serious consideration of the facts; everywhere the indignation that had been gathering against the persecution of Jews was allowed to dissipate itself. The desire to be reassured about the situation of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain seized on the Soviet Union's resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel in July 1953; on the fact that a number of prominent leaders of Jewish origin like Kaganovich in Russia, Minc and Berman in Poland, Rakosi in Hungary, and Chisinevski in Rumania continued in their posts; and the failure of the long awaited trial of Ana Pauker to take place.

A whole array of ominous signs and outright acts of persecution went unnoted: except for the nine Moscow doctors not one victim of the anti-Jewish measures was released and rehabilitated; Zionism continued to be a criminal offense; hundreds of Zionists and other Jewish leaders continued to languish in jail; all Jewish communal activities and any kind of authentic Jewish cultural endeavor were proscribed; emigration was forbidden, all attempts to cross the borders illegally being punishable by death; the wild charges that had been leveled against Jewish leaders all over the world in the Slansky trial were not retracted, but on the contrary repeated with ever greater violence; and the existence of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy against the Communist regimes remained an article of faith for all Soviet and satellite Communists.

Zionism, as well as every kind of Jewish communal activity, was marked down for

liquidation; every Jew was suspected of being a member of the criminal Zionist conspiracy. Israel was permitted to reopen its embassy in Moscow and to sell the Soviet government lemons and oranges which it resold to its subjects at an immense profit; but the leaders of the Jewish state, after as before, remained "agents of imperialism" ready and eager to commit the blackest crimes; any past contact with them was treasonable on the face of it. Communist propaganda continued to incite the Arabs against the Jewish "bulwark of imperialism" in the Middle East. Communist leaders of Jewish ancestry, although ardent anti-Zionists, continued to be "liquidated" for "Zionism."

Nor did the Soviet leaders trouble to veil their anti-Semitic activities and agitation from the world. On April 16, 1953, two weeks after the release of the Moscow doctors, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Vaclav David, answering an Israeli complaint in the Political Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, upheld all the charges against Israel and Zionism that had been made at the Slansky trial, and again accused Zionist and other Jewish organizations of being hotbeds of American-sponsored sabotage and espionage. When Israel's delegates objected to this, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Vishinsky charged them with slander. In Czechoslovakia, the press continued the anti-Semitic campaign unabated, taking care only to label all Jews as "Zionists."

NOR did the attack remain merely verbal. On May 26, 1953, four Czechoslovak diplomats stood trial in Prague. Three of them were Jews: Richard Slansky, brother of Rudolf, Edvard Goldstuecker, former Czechoslovak minister to Israel, and Pavel Kavan, former attaché of the Czechoslovak embassy in London. Richard Slansky and Goldstuecker were sentenced to life imprisonment, Kavan to twenty-five years. The charges brought against the defendants in this "little Slansky trial" were the same as in the big one: participation in the worldwide Zionist conspiracy. Goldstuecker was

accused of having been Slansky's liaison man with the statesmen of Israel, Kavan his contact with the Western imperialists.

A few months later, two Israeli citizens were sentenced in Prague on these same counts: Mordecai Oren, leader of the pro-Soviet wing of the left Socialist Mapam party and a member of the Knesset, received fifteen years in prison; his cousin, Simon Orenstein, a former commercial attaché of the Israeli legation in Prague, got jail for life. Oren, who had always been ardently pro-Communist, was arrested in December 1951 when visiting Prague. The organizers of the frame-up had apparently needed at least one genuine member of a Zionist organization to give some color to their characterization of the Slansky group as "Zionist." After being held incommunicado for almost a year, Oren was produced as a witness in the Slansky trial and dutifully "confessed." After the trial he disappeared back into jail, and thirteen diplomatic representations by Israel seeking permission to communicate with him remained without result. Finally in November 1953 a brief statement informed Israel that Oren had been sentenced in August and Orenstein in October in secret proceedings.

On January 29, 1954, seven more accomplices of Slansky were tried in Prague: Marie Svermova, Jarmila Taussigova, Mikulas Landau (Landau), Bedrich Hajek (Karpeles), Ervin Polak, Vitezslav Fuchs, and Hanus Lomsky (Gabriel Lieben). All were former party secretaries; Polak had been a high official of the secret police. Six of the seven were Jews, Lomsky-Lieben being the son of a famous rabbi. The only non-Jewish defendant, Marie Svermova, was accused of having been the mistress of the Jewish "traitor" Otto Sling, executed with Slansky in December 1952. Svermova received a life sentence, the other defendants forced labor terms from fifteen to twenty-five years.

Except for Oren and Orenstein, who had been pro-Communist Zionists, all the "Zionist conspirators" were men with lifelong anti-Zionist and anti-religious records. Their only connection with things Jewish was their "racial origin" and perhaps their childhood

memories. Associating such people with "Zionism" served only one purpose: to remind the public that they were Jews and to identify Jews—all Jews—with foreign-directed subversion.

The Bratislava trial of April 1954 introduced a new stage. It showed that even non-Jews could be labeled pro-Zionist and used to foment anti-Semitism. The idea was not as original as it seemed. The Nazis also used to speak of *Judenknechte*; though somebody whom the Nazis hated hadn't even a drop of "Jewish blood," he could still be denounced as a "lackey of the Jews." The East German Communists, as a matter of fact, imitated this Nazi practice as early as January 1953 when they charged the "pure Aryan" Communist leader Paul Merker with having served the Zionist cause by collaborating with anti-Nazi Jews during his emigration.

Every two or three months the Czech and Slovak people were reminded of the "Zionist crimes" by further trials and the "Slansky gang" was made responsible for all the hardships and rigors of life under Communism. President Antonin Zapotocky repeatedly asserted that most of the country's economic difficulties had been caused by the sabotaging efforts of the Slanskyites. A recent congress of Czechoslovak writers blamed them for the low level of contemporary Czech literature.

THIS campaign was by no means limited to Czechoslovakia, but embraced a number of the satellite states. In Hungary, in March 1954, Gabor Peter, the former chief of the secret police, and Gyula Decsi, the former Minister of Justice, were tried for "crimes against the State and People." Gabor Peter received a life sentence, Gyula Decsi nine years. Both were of Jewish origin and had been arrested at the time of the Moscow doctors' affair. The former police chief was accused of having helped Jews flee Hungary. His other crimes, though many, were not made public. It was common knowledge, however, that he had organized the mass deportation of Hungarian Jews from the

cities. This tormentor of the Jews was now denounced as a "Jewish conspirator."

A month later, simultaneously with the Bratislava show, another public trial took place in Bucharest. The chief defendant here was Lucretiu Patrascanu. He was a Communist of long standing and a lawyer who had defended Ana Pauker in the 30's. During the war, he had been in a concentration camp; when he was freed he helped to execute the coup that deposed Dictator Ion Antonescu, signed the 1944 armistice agreement which opened Rumania to Soviet troops, and was Minister of Justice in the first postwar cabinets. He took a prominent part in Andrei Vishinsky's coup overthrowing the democratic Rumanian government and delivering the country over to the Communists. Nevertheless, in 1948 he was forced to resign and disappeared from the political scene. He was arrested soon afterwards and spent a number of years in prison. Now he was hailed before a tribunal and accused of having been an agent of the Gestapo, the Rumanian fascist secret police, and the American legation. He was sentenced to death and executed.

It was remarkable that none of Patrascanu's ten co-defendants had ever been among his intimate friends. They had evidently been "associated" with him only for the purposes of the show trial. Since it is the Politburo that decides who shall be a "traitor," the composition of the amalgam provides us with some clues as to Communist policies. Now at least five of Patrascanu's ten co-defendants were of Jewish origin. All had been members of the Communist party, and some of them officials of the secret police as well. One of them, Remus Koffler, was executed; four others—Emil Kalmanovic, Herbert Silver, Jacques Berman, and Harry Brauner—received jail sentences ranging from twelve years to life.

It is clear from these proceedings in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Rumania that it is now standard operating procedure for the Communist leaders to give the trials of their purged colleagues an anti-Semitic emphasis. "Protecting Zionist conspirators"

and "helping Jewish capitalists to carry off the country's wealth to Israel" have now become regular features of most indictments in the political trials behind the Iron Curtain.

The effects of this incessant stigmatization of "Jewish traitors" and their protectors can easily be imagined. Even those who lend no credence to a lying anti-Semitic propaganda are intimidated by the inescapable conclusion that helping Jews, any Jews, may prove to be a serious criminal offense.

III

THOSE who think to find some consolation in the fact that the victims of the show trials are Jewish Communists who in many cases themselves persecuted the Jewish people, should remember that for each "prominent" victim, hundreds of obscure citizens are demoted, thrown out of their jobs, or deported without trial. No Communist purge is ever aimed at individuals alone. These individuals always stand for a "suspect," "dangerous," "hostile" group. The never ending trials against "Zionist traitors" mean quite simply that the Jews have become such a group, to be isolated, "rendered harmless," and finally "liquidated."

Behind the screen of public and semi-public prosecutions, a systematic terror campaign is in fact being conducted against thousands of authentic members of Jewish communities and hundreds of their former leaders. These leaders, many of them Zionists, had been driven from their positions in the Jewish communities and organizations in 1948 and 1949, in the great "ideological campaign" that followed Ilya Ehrenburg's notorious anti-Zionist article in the Moscow *Pravda*. Only a few were fortunate enough to be able to emigrate to Israel legally, or to flee across the borders.

The majority of the Jewish leaders were forced to remain behind the Iron Curtain and were soon arrested on some flimsy pretext. They were accused of "organizing illegal emigration" during the short period when Communist authorities did everything in their power to get as many Jews as possible out of the country. They were charged with

"corrupting" officials who considered a small gratuity theirs as a matter of right. They were arrested for "foreign currency manipulations" set on foot by the same authorities who were now prosecuting them. Their contacts with the Israeli legations and Jewish philanthropic organizations, which the organizing and financing of the emigration made necessary, were now evidence of treason and espionage.

HUNDREDS of these Zionist and religious leaders have been languishing in the jails of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Rumania for years. It is the shame of the world Zionist movement and of the Jewish communities in the West that no campaign has been organized to arouse world opinion to secure their release during all these years.

Now these men are being tried and sentenced. But where the fallen Communist leaders were tried in a blaze of publicity, the trials of the real Zionists are conducted in camera. Relatives of the accused, however, are sometimes admitted, and knowledge of the draconic sentences meted out is apparently allowed to trickle down to the local Jewish population, probably for purposes of intimidation. It takes some time for the reports to reach Austria, West Germany, or Israel, so that our knowledge of the proceedings is necessarily incomplete. But what we know points to an all-pervasive terror.

In August 1953, nine former leaders of the Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia were secretly tried in Prague. One of the defendants was sentenced to death, this later being commuted to life imprisonment; eight co-defendants received sentences up to twenty-three years in jail.

In Slovakia, about a hundred former active Zionists were concentrated in a Bratislava prison awaiting trial. This was reported last fall; we do not know how many of these trials have since taken place.

In Hungary, Bela Denes, a leader of the Socialist Mapai party, was arrested in 1949 and tried with several co-defendants, for organizing "illegal emigration" to Israel; he was sentenced to three years in prison. After serving his full sentence, he was kept in jail

for two more years. Henrik Galos, a former secretary of the Zionist Federation, was deported from Budapest and interned in a rural place. In 1953, he was re-arrested and tried again, together with Denes, on the very same charges of pre-1949 Zionist activity. In this case, however, protests abroad, especially in Austria and Switzerland, were voiced early and strong enough to stay the hand of the persecutors. According to reports from Hungary, Denes and Galos were acquitted. But they have not been allowed to leave Hungary and their fate is unknown.

Other Hungarian Jews were not so lucky. Georg Schay, leader of the youth organization Habonim, was sentenced to five years. Judith Steiner, a former employee of the Israeli legation in Budapest, received a four-year sentence. Abraham Kornitzer, a former leader of Agudath Israel, was tried for "inciting Jews to emigrate"; we do not know what his sentence was.

The Jewish leaders arrested in 1949 were not the only victims. After they had been purged from their posts in the communities, the Communists had imposed their own creatures on the Jewish organizations. Most prominent among these were Lajos Stoeckler, who became the president of the religious community, Dr. Laszlo Benedek, the director of the Jewish hospital, and Jozsef Andras (Adolf Fisch), the head of the community education department, a man so servile that he proposed to rewrite the Bible in conformity with the Communist line. In 1953, after the arrest of the Moscow doctors, the Stoeckler clique, too, was arrested. They were not released after the Moscow reversal, and there were reports from Budapest saying that Stoeckler had received ten, and Benedek eight, years in jail.

BUT the climax of terror was reached in Rumania. Last August already, a secret trial was conducted in Bucharest in which the defendants were accused, among other things, of being imperialist agents for having helped to shelter British parachutists from the Gestapo during the war. This trial was remarkable for the fact that the defendant

Edgar Kenner refused to confess—he reminded the court of his sufferings in fascist jails and stoutly defended his Zionist convictions. He was sentenced to fourteen years at forced labor; his four co-defendants received sentences from ten to fifteen years.

In another trial, Jean Littman and Mme Susanne Benvenisti, leaders of the Rumanian section of the World Jewish Congress, were accused of having accepted foreign money to carry on Zionist activities and finance emigration; they were sentenced to fifteen and ten years respectively in jail.

In the spring of 1954, the secret trials reached such numbers as to constitute a mass terror. Not less than one hundred Jewish leaders were tried and sentenced in one month. In one trial, A. L. Zissu, a well-known writer and former chairman of the Jewish party, and Mishu Benvenisti, the former president of the Zionist organization, received life sentences, while Mme Mella Jancu, former chairman of the Jewish health organization, Moshe Weiss, a leader of the Zionist youth, and the journalist N. Moshkowitz were each sentenced to twenty years.

A second trial was held of twenty-two members of the left-wing Socialist youth organization Hashomer Hatzair. Its leader, Armand Frank, defended his Zionist convictions and declared: "You have tortured and killed many of our members in your dungeons. This crime will never be forgotten. . . ." He was sentenced to twenty years, his comrades receiving like sentences.

In a third trial, forty defendants were arraigned, among them six women. Some of these defendants were Dr. Cornel Jancu, a well-known physician and leader of the General Zionists; Bernard Roehrlich, a former president of the Zionist organization; Leon Itzkar, a former director of the Palestine Foundation fund; Dr. Theodor Loewenstein, a well-known historian; Dan Eshanu, a leader of the Zionist Socialists. The roster reads like a Who's Who in Rumanian Jewry.

IV.

THE increasing indications of a co-ordination of the anti-Jewish drives in many of

the Communist countries is evidence that the Slansky trial was no mere aberrant manifestation of "anti-Semitism in one country." Czechoslovakia was simply the locale which Moscow chose for its first venture into official anti-Semitism.

We now have new evidence to confirm this deduction. According to information supplied by the MVD officer Nikola Khokhlov, who was sent to the West to murder a Russian emigré and surrendered to American authorities in Western Germany in February 1954, a discussion of the desirability of instituting an anti-Semitic campaign began in high Soviet circles as early as 1951. One of the first victories of the anti-Jewish faction was a purge of Jews from high positions in the secret police. Khokhlov's immediate superior, the police general Leonid Alexandrovich Eitingen, a Jew, was one of the first to be demoted and arrested. The leader of the anti-Semitic faction, Semyon D. Ignatiev, became Minister of State Security, and later prepared the case against the Moscow doctors.

After Stalin's death, when Beria had recovered for a time his supremacy over the secret police, Ignatiev was transferred out of his security post into the party secretariat, and then relieved of all his duties. After the fall of Beria, however, he was rehabilitated. At the same time, Khokhlov now tells us, General Eitingen was re-arrested and executed. The anti-Semites have definitely won.

Ignatiev became the Secretary General of the Communist party in the Autonomous Republic of Bashkiria and was elected to the Supreme Soviet. Nothing speaks more clearly for the determined continuation of the Soviet anti-Semitic campaign than this public rehabilitation of the man who, according to official statements by the Soviet government, was responsible for extorting false confessions in order to foment racial hatred.

IT IS interesting to note that the anti-Semitic course was adopted "collectively," after a debate in the highest party and secret police circles. Of course, the decision, when it was taken, must have been approved by the *Khoziain*. Undoubtedly, Stalin directed the

plot against Beria of which the doctors' affair was a part.

But many writers continue to insist that Soviet anti-Semitism was a personal whim of the dictator's, like his aversion to Shostakovich's music. They remind us of Stalin's rude joke, dating back to pre-revolutionary days, about a little pogrom of the Menshevik faction (with its large number of Jews) of the Russian Social Democratic party being a good idea; they interpret Stalin's anti-Semitism as an envious response to the intellectual superiority of Trotsky and the other brilliant Jewish intellectuals who played so large a role in the early years of the Russian revolution. All this would imply, of course, that anti-Semitism was an accidental feature of recent Soviet policy which was bound to vanish with the Great Dictator's death.

It did not. The continuation of the Soviet anti-Semitic campaign under Malenkov and Krushchev is proof, if proof is needed, that the persecution of Jews has as its root cause not one individual's resentment, but *raisons d'état* as they are understood by a totalitarian regime. Stalin, after all, persecuted other minorities as well, among them the Georgians, toward whom he harbored no particular aversion.

Stalin was no Russian chauvinist by personal inclination. It was the inner logic of the totalitarian system that forced him, after a long evolution, to decree that the "bourgeois nationalism" of the minorities, all minorities, was subversive of the imperialist aims of the Soviet regime, while Russian chauvinism and xenophobia were forces that could be made to serve the aims of Communist expansion. His famous statement following the defeat of Germany in 1945, that the Great Russians were the leading nationality of the Soviet Union, made clear his recognition that the survival and expansion of the Soviet empire required giving the Great Russians the leading role. The fight against "cosmopolitanism," which is only another word for internationalism, and against "bourgeois nationalism," which means the nationalism of non-Russian nationalities, followed more or less inevitably.

THE Jews became a special target of this attack because they are, as it were, "cosmopolitans" and "bourgeois nationalists" at the same time. Their religion is "cosmopolitan," i.e., universal; so were the original revolutionary aspirations of individual Jewish radicals—it was internationalism that led so many Jews into the Russian Social Democracy. But they are also "nationalists" according to the Soviet usage of this word; that is to say, their feelings of group solidarity are strong and ardent, Jews having been taught the value of such solidarity by the experience of centuries.

A totalitarian regime cannot tolerate any sort of group bond—be it only one of mere personal sentiment and affection—that is not subordinated to the purposes and hierarchy of the totalitarian order. It is bad enough when a Ukrainian feels a love and sympathy for other Ukrainians that might interfere with his blind submission to the masters of the empire. But what must these rulers think of the ties of Jewish fellowship, which reach across the borders of the Soviet empire to every part of the world?

A Soviet Jew is likely to have relatives and friends in one or another of the capitalist imperialist countries. What does it matter that he has been forced to break all relations with them and to profess indifference or hatred toward all things Jewish? Were not Jews throughout the world, however assimilated to their milieus, shaken to the depths of their being by the Jewish catastrophe under the Nazis, which was a matter of indifference to the rulers of Soviet empire? Could one really rely upon them if considerations of high policy should lead the Soviet Union to some new version of the Soviet-Nazi pact, or to the promotion and instigation of a massacre of Jews in Israel by the Arab "movement of national liberation"? Would not one Jew help another to escape persecution and starvation, even if the other Jew were crim-

inally fleeing from the "socialist" or "people's democratic" fatherlands? Did not the Soviet Jews, after decades of isolation and Communist indoctrination, greet the foundation of the State of Israel with ill-concealed rapture? Would not 90 per cent of all Jews, if emigration were allowed, instantly fly from the Soviet paradise?

READING the records of anti-Jewish trials, one is impressed by the absurdity of the charges and the flimsiness of the so-called proofs, the cynical demagogic appeals to the lowest prejudices. But this is not the whole story. Occasionally one also feels that to a certain extent the prosecutors believe what they are saying. They do not of course believe that Slansky, Geminder, or Merker were Zionists, that the treacherous Zionist plots they constantly refer to actually exist, that there really is a kind of Council of the Elders of Zion presided over by Bernard Baruch, Henry Morgenthau, and David Ben Gurion. What they do believe is perhaps best expressed by the words that a Jew is a Jew, that he feels himself in some sense or another bound up with the fate of his fellow Jews and of "world Jewry," and that this represents a danger to a regime whose first commandment is: "Thou shalt have no other gods before the Soviet Union and the Leader (or, as at present, Leadership) of its Communist party."

Democratic society tolerates a diversity of beliefs, traditions, emotional attachments, and group ties and solidarities. Totalitarian society cannot. As Soviet Communism became totalitarian, its original recognition in principle of the rights of Jews, as of other minorities, has changed into outright persecution and anti-Semitism. Any Jewish illusion, any Jewish appeasement of Communism is, as the period after Stalin's death again shows, as unrealistic and hopeless as appeasement in general, and perhaps more so.